

Department of Justice Complaint Leads Court to Declare Newark Motel A Criminal Nuisance Property

Operators of Rodeway Inn must address criminal activity or potentially lose property

The operators of a Newark motel that had more than 900 calls for police service since 2013 have agreed that it is a criminal nuisance property after action by Attorney General Matt Denn's office, and have agreed to a plan to reduce criminal activity or potentially be evicted from the property.

The stipulated order in Superior Court is between the Department of Justice and the operators of the Rodeway Inn at 1110 and 1120 South College Avenue in Newark.

The motel has been the site of ongoing criminal investigations and arrests. As stated in the complaint, Newark Police have made arrests for prostitution occurring in the motel rooms, drug sales from a room, drug use in rooms and in the parking lot, and a number of sexual assaults.

The complaint was filed under the state's Criminal Nuisance Abatement Act, which empowers the Attorney General "to encourage owners, landlords, operators and managers of buildings, places or premises to take the affirmative steps necessary to prevent violations on their properties," as stated in Title 10, Section 7102 of the Delaware Code.

In order to avoid closure of the business as allowed under the criminal nuisance law, the operators of the motel have agreed to several stipulations, including:

- Installing a daytime and nighttime video surveillance system
- Making a good faith effort to get a photo ID from anyone who registers for or stays in a room
- Ensuring everyone on property after 8:00 p.m. is registered to a room or is told to leave the property
- Hiring a reputable security company utilizing an on-site security guard between the hours of 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m.
- Posting a sign stating the property is “Drug and Prostitution Free,” and any prostitution, illegal drug activity, or other criminal activity is prohibited and will result in criminal prosecution.

Additionally, the Attorney General’s Office has executed a separate “Enforcement Agreement” with the property owner, which requires the property owner to seek possession of the property from the motel operators if the Court should order closure of the property or terminate the motel operators’ lease to the property.

“It is a sad fact that there are some business and residential properties in our state that, through neglect, serve as magnets for crime and require a disproportionate amount of police attention, and this motel has been one of them,” said Attorney General Denn. “The operators of this motel are now obligated by court order to aggressively address the criminal behavior that has become a regular occurrence there or face being forced to close the motel if police calls, complaints and arrests continue.”

Deputy Attorneys General Roopa Sabesan and William Kassab handled the matter for the Department of Justice. A copy of the court-approved consent order with the motel operator can be seen [here](#).